

MOSS LANDING HARBOR (MONTEREY BAY), CALIF., AUTHORIZING IMPROVEMENT IN INTEREST OF MAINTAINING AND INCREASING FISH PRODUCTION ESSENTIAL FOR THE WAR PROGRAM

DECEMBER 7, 1943.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. WHITE (for Mr. JOHNSON of California), from the Committee on Commerce, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany S. 1233]

The Committee on Commerce, to whom was referred the bill (S. 1233) to authorize the construction and maintenance of Moss Landing Harbor (Monterey Bay), Calif., having considered the same report favorably thereon with an amendment and recommend that the bill as amended do pass.

The amendment is for the purpose of carrying out the recommendation of the Bureau of the Budget to provide that local interests furnish free of cost to the United States necessary rights-of-way and suitably bulkheaded disposal areas for new work and subsequent maintenance when and as required, and hold the United States free from claims for damages resulting from construction work.

As amended, the bill has the approval of the War Department and the Secretary of the Interior as will appear in the following letters:

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington, October 21, 1943.

HON. JOSIAH W. BAILEY,
*Chairman, Committee on Commerce,
United States Senate, Washington, D. C.*

DEAR SENATOR BAILEY: Reference is made to your letter of June 19, 1943, requesting the views of this Department regarding Senate bill No. 1233, "To authorize the construction and maintenance of Moss Landing Harbor (Monterey Bay), Calif."

It is proposed by the bill to provide for the immediate construction of harbor facilities at Moss Landing, Monterey Bay, Calif., needed in aid of fishery production. To comply with a resolution of the Senate Committee on Commerce a survey has been made and a project covering a comprehensive harbor development at Moss Landing has been formulated. The project is now under consideration by the Department but detailed study of it as a whole has not advanced sufficiently to warrant its submission to Congress at this time. Plans have been completed, however, and estimates made for those features of the project con-

templated by the bill which if constructed at an early date would, it is believed, be of material value to the war food program.

As the present protected area in Monterey Bay is largely occupied by Navy patrol forces and Army amphibious forces there is not room for the mooring and operation of fishing craft. There are now five fish-canning and reduction plants at Moss Landing. The boats serving these plants must lie off shore and discharge into hoppers in the open bay. When the weather is unfavorable, the discharge is hazardous and sometimes impossible. Both the boats and the plants, therefore, operate at reduced efficiency. The harbor facilities planned would provide safer and more convenient anchorage for fishing vessels, and it is thought that a substantial increase in the number of vessels employed and in the output of the processing plants would result from the improvement. If authorized as provided in the bill the War Department is in position to undertake construction of the work at once. The dredging and all necessary equipment and materials are available or readily obtainable, and can be employed without detriment to the prosecution of any other war project.

In view of the wartime need for increase in the production of fishery commodities the Department considers the proposed legislation desirable and recommends its early enactment. In this connection, there is enclosed a copy of letter dated June 17, 1943, from the Secretary of the Interior to this Department.

The foregoing report was submitted to the Bureau of the Budget which advised that, while there would be no objection to the submission of such report as the Department may deem appropriate, the legislation should not be considered to be in accord with the program of the President unless amended to provide that local interests furnish free of cost to the United States necessary rights-of-way and suitably bulkheaded disposal areas for new work and subsequent maintenance when and as required, and hold the United States free from claims for damages resulting from construction work.

Sincerely yours,

HENRY L. STIMSON,
Secretary of War.

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington 25, D. C., November 2, 1943.

Hon. JOSIAH W. BAILEY,
*Chairman, Committee on Commerce,
United States Senate.*

MY DEAR SENATOR BAILEY: Reference is made to your letter of June 19, requesting comments on S. 1233, "A bill to authorize the construction and maintenance of Moss Landing Harbor (Monterey Bay), Calif."

The project which this bill would authorize is, in my judgment, one which should be undertaken by the Federal Government at the earliest possible date. Accordingly, I recommend enactment of the bill with the amendment hereinafter proposed at the suggestion of the Bureau of the Budget.

The development of Moss Landing as a harbor for fishing vessels would aid the Government's food production program materially. At the present time vessels fishing for pilchards, or sardines, in the Monterey Bay region are able to find shelter and harbor facilities only in Monterey Harbor. Formerly these vessels received some shelter from the breakwater partially enclosing Monterey Harbor but this is now sanded up and rendered unavailable to the fishing fleet because of the greatly increased requirements for naval vessels. The fishing vessels are required to anchor in portions of the harbor east of the breakwater where they are fully exposed to northerly winds. The hazards of loss to the fishing fleet are, therefore, acute as evidenced by a single storm of short duration during the past year in which four vessels were beached and two completely destroyed. Each vessel of the type lost represents the potential production of more than 3,000 tons of pilchards per season. Since the pilchard fleet already has been greatly reduced by requisition for military use, further loss of such productive capacity is a serious threat to the war food production program.

The harbor at Moss Landing provided for by the bill would alleviate the danger to fishing vessels by providing suitable shelter and provide room for the development of additional processing facilities for utilizing their catch. The harbor area at Monterey, where most of the pilchard processing plants in this region are located, is extremely crowded because of the limited shore line, and one canning establishment has already been compelled to find space elsewhere on the termination of its lease of city property. With additional space available at Moss Land-

ing, the expansion of the present processing plants and landing facilities would be possible and would result in more rapid landing of the pilchard catches, free from the danger of interruption by stormy weather.

Fishing time of the pilchard fleet would also be saved with a resulting increase in production, through providing marine ways at Moss Landing for the repair of fishing vessels which now must, at considerable expense, be towed to San Francisco. Improved harbor facilities would also permit the construction of freezing plants for the cold storage holding of fish in central California, a service which is greatly needed.

In view of the urgency of assuring maximum production from the pilchard fishery, which is the largest single fishery in the United States, the construction of additional harbor facilities at Moss Landing to supplement those now provided at Monterey would be desirable. It is recommended that authorization for the construction be granted and that the work be adequately financed as soon as possible in order to be of maximum value during the coming winter months when pilchard production will be at its peak.

With respect to S. 1233 I have been advised by the Bureau of the Budget that "the enactment of the proposed legislation should not be considered to be in accord with the program of the President unless amended to provide that local interests furnish free of cost to the United States necessary rights-of-way and suitably bulkheaded disposal areas for new work and subsequent maintenance when and as required, and hold the United States free from claims for damages resulting from construction work."

In order to carry out the recommendation of the Bureau of the Budget quoted above, I suggest that the period at the end of line 8 of the bill be changed to a semicolon and the following proviso be added immediately thereafter:

"Provided, however, That the construction of such project shall not be commenced until responsible local agencies have given assurances satisfactory to the Secretary of War that they will (a) provide without cost to the United States all necessary rights-of-way, together with suitably bulkheaded disposal areas, for the construction and maintenance of the project, when and as required by the Secretary of War, and (b) hold and save the United States free from damages resulting from construction work."

Sincerely yours,

HAROLD L. ICKES,
Secretary of the Interior.

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